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EC67-1196 Shopping for a Clothes Dryer

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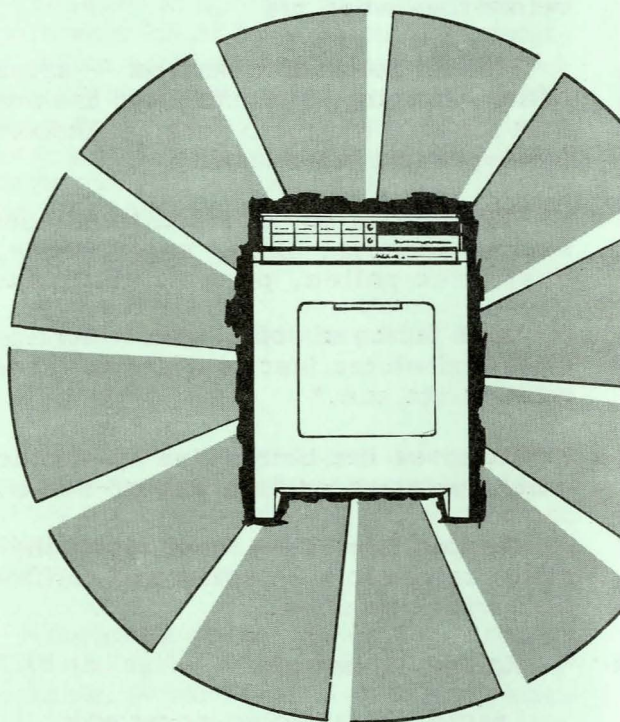
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shopping for a
**CLOTHES
DRYER**



EXTENSION SERVICE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING
E. F. FROLIK, DEAN J. L. ADAMS, DIRECTOR

By Mrs. Clara N. Leopold
Extension Home Management Specialist

TALKING POINTS FOR OWNING A DRYER

Saves average user 20 eight-hour working days and 40 miles of walking a year.

Every day is a good wash day -- wind, dust, rain and cold make no difference.

Fewer clothes and household linens needed when they can be washed and back in use in a couple of hours' time. Especially advantageous where there are children who may outgrow their clothes before they wear out.

Protects health of homemaker -- saves lifting, carrying, stretching and dashing from a steamy room into freezing outdoors to hang or take down laundry.

Laundry is not exposed to outdoor soil -- insects, birds, soot, smoke, dust, tree pollen, pets and children.

Less fading of colors than when line dried and whites just as white as those dried in the sun.*

Removes lint better than spasmodic wind agitation on line out-of-doors.

Napped fabrics -- corduroys, chenille, terry cloth -- softer and fluffier than with line drying.

No lines in the yard.

BASIC FEATURES TO LOOK FOR

Cabinet

Most outside finishes are of synthetic enamel on sheet steel. Porcelain enameled steel is more durable but more expensive.

The drum often is porcelain enameled steel and is quite satisfactory.

Leveling feet, important for quiet, efficient operation.

Door should close firmly. Right or left opening should swing wide open--full half circle usually more convenient. Drop-down door available in some brands -- although interferes with placing basket directly under opening.

Fuel and Cost of Operation

May be gas or electric. Installation costs, inconveniences and cost of operation are factors to consider. From the performance standpoint there is little difference. Choice may depend on present gas connections or wiring, on local fuel rates, or simply personal preference.

Average energy needed to dry a load of clothes in an electric dryer is 2.7 kilowatt hours. Multiply price you pay per KWH by 2.7 and you have cost of drying a load by electricity.

Average natural gas consumption is 9.6 cubic feet per load, so multiply that by your gas rate and you have the answer on operating cost with a gas dryer.

Initial cost of gas dryer is usually from \$25 to \$50 higher than for electric ones, and there are differences in installation charges. Requires 115 volt electrical circuit for turning drum, operating fan and for lights.

Insulation

Cooled by air circulation vs. Fiber glass, spun glass or aluminum foil insulations.

Lint Trap

Convenient location. Located at top back, can be removed without stooping.

In drum door, easy reminder to empty it. Location especially important for dryers not vented outdoors.

Safety Features

High-limit thermostat to shut off heat in case of overheating.

Controls located high enough to be out of the way of children.

Be sure cabinet is grounded. Often in drain hose. Any replacement should also have the grounding wire.

Safety switch to shut off motor and heater when the door is opened, then resumes automatically when closed. In gas dryer, a cutoff of flow of gas should anything go wrong with the gas or electric system.

Fuse easily accessible without removing screwed panels.

Underwriter's Laboratory Seal for electric dryers for safety tests; and in the case of a gas dryer, American Gas Assn. label, to show unit has met safety and performance tests.

Venting

As much as a gallon of water per hour is extracted from clothes by a dryer. If this is evaporated into the room, the excessive humidity can damage woodwork, wallpaper and foundations, as well as make the house uncomfortable to work in, particularly when the house does not have automatically controlled humidity.

There are three methods of removing steam and lint during the drying process:

Outside venting - requires ductwork. Moisture and most of the lint are carried to the out-of-doors. All gas dryers should be vented. Check with local building code.

Water-condenser types use a steady stream of cold water (approximately 20 gallons per load) to condense steam. Must be connected with a source of cold water and a drain. Most of the lint will go down the drain, although some models also have a lint trap.

Air condenser types collect the water in a drip pan that must be emptied if it is not connected to a drain. Will also have a lint trap.

Installation

Electric dryer should be on 230-240 volts (three-wire service). Sometimes necessary to operate on a 208 volt, 3-wire service at lower input. In some, a choice of direction for venting to permit flush-to-wall installation in any room area. For satisfactory operation, vent pipe should be of limited length and have a limited number of elbows. Should be vented away from prevailing winds.

Controls

A dryer has a combination of controls:

Time Control

Timed drying-pre-select time you think will be required to dry a particular load. Dryer operates for that length of time and then stops. Some provide up to two-hours for very heavy items.

Automatic drying-you determine type of load and select the setting accordingly -- delicate, regular, heavy -- and dryer stops automatically when the load is dry.

Temperature Controls

There are two types of temperature controls:

Single setting of the temperature dial. Operates at a fixed heat, usually about 140°F. May get too hot for some fabrics.

Choice of three settings -- low, medium, and high. Low is usually 120° to 140°F. Medium is about 165° to 170°F. High is between 175° and 210°F. Provides variation in drying according to type of fabric or load.

Humidity Control

Dial setting to control amount of moisture left in clothes. Indicator may be numbered or may be marked "Dry" and "Damp Dry."

Capacity

If washer and dryer are combination models made by one manufacturer, the dryer probably dries the same quantity that washer washes. If they do not match, investigate capacity of dryer under consideration.

DELUXE OR TOP-OF-THE-LINE FEATURES

For limited budgets, a low-end or middle-of-the-line dryer is probably the best buy. Price increases as the number and variety of special features increase.

Quality and dependability are seldom a question of price these days. In any given line the basic mechanism, the heating and air circulation systems, the safety features and even the warranty are likely to be the same in all models, regardless of price.

And it is worth remembering that the more automatic features there are, the more likelihood there is for service calls, since there are more things to go wrong.

Purchaser must weigh the extras against family's needs, the present and future contents of the laundry basket -- and then decide what is best.

The following are features found on some higher priced models:

Multiple Drying Cycles

Offer a choice of several drying methods, including:

Air circulation with no heat, used for nylons and articles with plastic findings, for fluffing feather pillows, small rugs; dusting curtains and spreads, etc.

No tumbling action for fringed items, foam-rubber pillows, sweaters and socks.

No heat and no tumbling, to dry lamp shades, wet shoes and the like.

Wash-and-wear or permanent press cycle -- relaxes the wrinkles at a pre-determined temperature and then ends tumbling in cool air to remove wrinkles put in by laundering and wearing.

Lights

May be of help if room light is inadequate. Light may be one on the platform (back splasher) and/or inside the dryer.

Automatic Sprinkler

Clothes dry to right dampness for ironing, with no sprinkling. If, however, ironing is to be delayed, automatic sprinkler can be used to sprinkle a load in about fifteen minutes.

Window In Door

Shows drying progress at a glance.

Colors

Available from many manufacturers to match other major appliances.

Foot Pedal Latch

Handy for loading when arms are full of clothes.

Sound Signal

To announce that it's time to remove dried clothes (essential for keeping wash-and-wear smooth).

LOCATING THE DRYER

The best location for a dryer will be:

Next to the washing machine, so wet clothes don't have to be carried from washer to dryer. Open side of door is closest to washer so avoid walking or reaching around the door to load.

Where any necessary venting can be done through an outside wall with a minimum of disturbance to pipes.

In a well ventilated room.

Next to a table or counter on which to place items as taken from dryer.

WHICHEVER YOUR CHOICE

Buy a recognized brand.

Buy from a dealer you know and trust and who gives service.

Send the warranty card to the manufacturer -- note exactly what the warranty covers.

Check on availability of qualified servicemen to repair when needed.

Make sure whether price includes installation.

Read the instruction book; keep it handy; refer to it often.